

CHAPTER 10

TRAFFIC SAFETY

For many years, motor vehicle mishaps have accounted for a majority of the accidental deaths of Navy personnel. From 1982 through 1992, 2, 266 sailors died in motor vehicle mishaps. Many others suffered injuries that prevented them from returning to the work force.

The Navy's operational readiness depends upon its people. Motor vehicle mishaps are degrading this readiness through needless deaths and injuries. To combat this problem, the Navy established the Navy Traffic Safety Program. This program defines the safety precautions, regulations, and laws governing the use of all vehicles by Navy people, both on and off duty.

In this chapter, we address the following areas of the Navy Traffic Safety Program:

- Program applicability
- Program enforcement
- Safety belts
- Child safety seats
- Driver education
- Alcohol
- Pedestrians
- Portable headphones
- Motorcycles

NAVY TRAFFIC SAFETY PROGRAM

The Navy Traffic Safety Program defines motor vehicles as wheeled vehicles designed for travel on public roads under motor power or assisted by motor power. Vehicles include automobiles, trucks, motorcycles, mopeds, and all-terrain vehicles. Navy personnel may operate motor vehicles that they or the government own, lease, rent, or control. The Navy Traffic Safety Program applies to all naval bases, stations, facilities, installations, detachments, and all other property under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Navy. Every command, including forces afloat, must designate, in writing, a traffic safety program manager.

Department of Defense (DOD) and Navy motor vehicles must conform to Federal Motor Vehicle Safety

Standards. Tactical and combat vehicles must closely conform to federal motor carrier safety regulations. Each naval installation must strive to meet the highway safety program standards (HSPS) outlined in *Issuance of Navy Traffic Safety Program*, OPNAVINST 5100.12F. These standards include marking hazards, setting safe speed limits, adopting laws, and ensuring that drivers are licensed.

PROGRAM APPLICABILITY

The Navy Traffic Safety Program applies to the following motor vehicle operators, passengers, and pedestrians:

- All Navy military personnel (on or off base and on or off duty)
- All Navy civilian personnel in a duty status, on or off base
- All people in, or on any Navy motor vehicle, on or off base
- All people on a naval base, anytime

Even when driving an off-road motorcycle while off duty, personnel must obey applicable requirements of the Navy Traffic Safety Program.

PROGRAM ENFORCEMENT

Noncompliance with certain parts of the Navy Traffic Safety Program can result in a court martial under the *Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ)*. It can also result in nonjudicial punishment (NJP) for military people involved in minor violations. Noncompliance by civilian employees may result in disciplinary action.

If you receive an injury because you violate a Navy Traffic Safety Program regulation, the violation may be considered in determining the compensation to which you may be entitled. For example, if you have an accident while driving a friend's motorcycle without wearing the required protective equipment (an approved helmet, proper shoes, etc.) or before attending the motorcycle safety course, the Navy may not pay your medical bills. If you die, your family may not receive all of your death benefits.

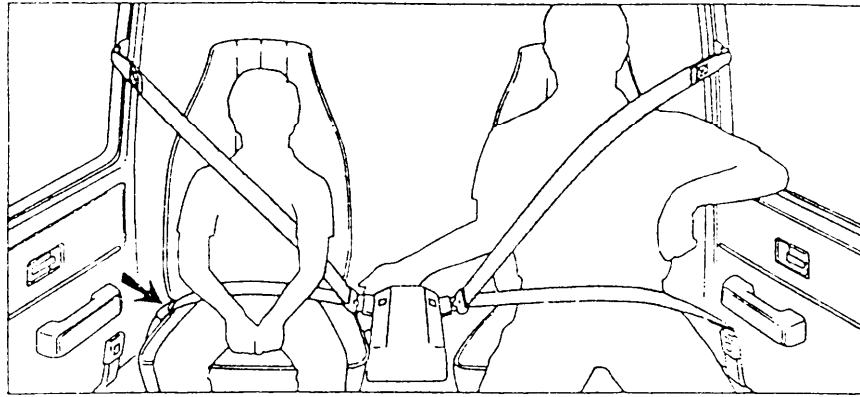


Figure 10-1.—Automatic safety belts with shoulder harnesses.

HOW AIRBAGS WORK

0 SECONDS:
Air bags in dash
and steering wheel

2/100 SECOND:
The air bags inflate,
filling with nitrogen gas.

8/100 SECOND:
Cushioning passengers
and deflating to
reduce rebound.

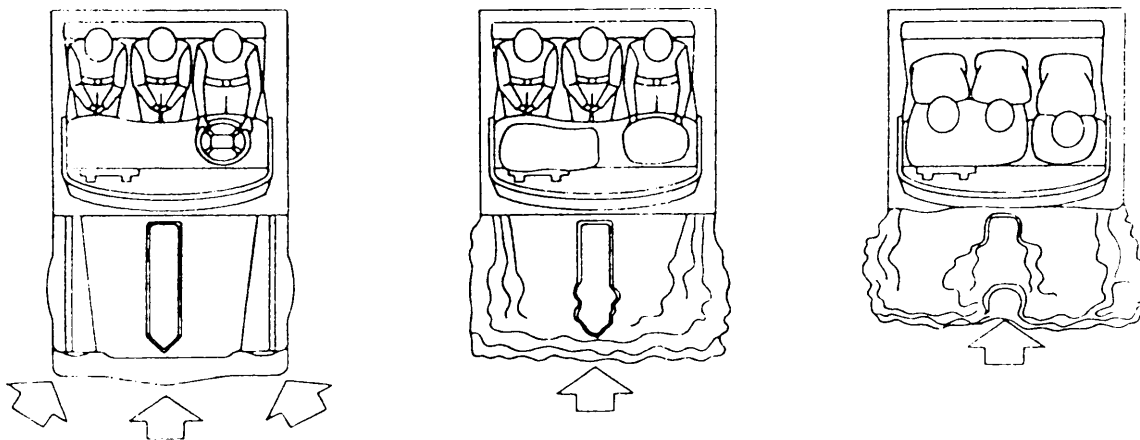


Figure 10-2.—Air bags save lives.

Issuance of Navy Traffic Safety Program, OPNAVINST 5100.12F, authorizes disciplinary action for certain violations. For example, you may receive disciplinary action for failing to follow safety belt rules or for riding in the cargo areas of vehicles (in the back of a pickup truck).

SAFETY BELTS

Safety belts have been provided in most vehicles for the past 20 years. The original lap seat belt provided a measure of safety, but injuries still occurred when people snapped forward into the dashboard or steering wheel. Therefore, manufacturers began equipping vehicles with safety belts by adding shoulder harnesses

(fig. 10-1) to prevent the upper body from moving forward. In some cars, the safety belt moves into place automatically when the car is started.

Since 1990, some manufacturers have begun to equip vehicles with air bags (fig. 10-2) as well as safety belts. Air bags have grown in popularity as survivors have testified to their effectiveness.

National statistics have shown that using safety belts saves lives. Many states now have laws requiring the use of safety belts. The Navy requires personnel to use safety belts at all times.

All Navy motor vehicles must be equipped with safety belts for the driver and passengers. Each person riding in, or operating, a Navy motor vehicle must wear a safety belt. If the vehicle does not have a safety belt at

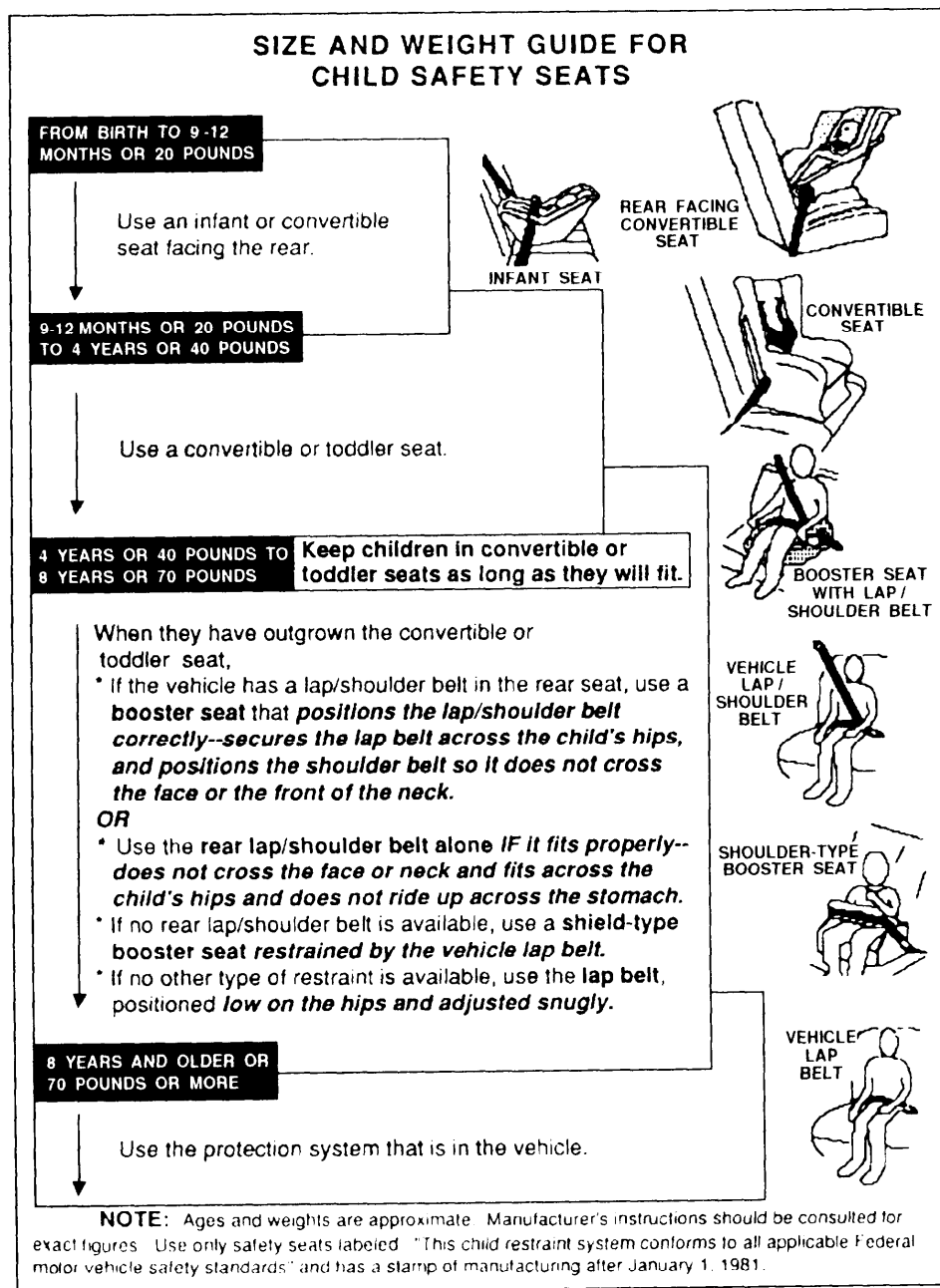


Figure 10-3.—Child safety seats.

a seating position, no one is permitted to ride in that seat. The only exception is buses not equipped with safety belts in passenger seating positions. If the cargo area of a vehicle does not have safety belts installed, no one is permitted to ride there. That means you may not catch a ride to the ship in the back of a Navy pickup or stake truck.

The rules are similar for private motor vehicles. All Navy personnel, on and off base, are required to wear a safety belt when riding in or operating a motor vehicle. If a vehicle does not have safety belts installed or if the

safety belts are damaged, military personnel are not permitted to ride in that vehicle. Public transportation, buses, and taxis are exceptions. You are not permitted to ride in the cargo area of motor vehicles without using safety belts.

CHILD SAFETY SEATS

All children under the age of 4 or weighing less than 40 pounds must be restrained in a child safety seat (fig. 10-3) while riding in a Navy motor vehicle or while

riding in a private motor vehicle on any naval base. This restriction applies even when a state has child safety seat laws that differ from the Navy's requirements.

WARNING

The operator of the vehicle is responsible for informing all passengers of the safety belt, child safety seat, and protective equipment requirements of the Navy Traffic Safety Program. That means, as an operator of a motor vehicle, you must make sure your passengers BUCKLE UP!

DRIVER EDUCATION

The Chief of Naval Education and Training (CNET) is required to provide all military personnel under the age of 26 who have a driver's license or who are required to operate a government motor vehicle with a minimum of 8 hours of classroom instruction in traffic safety. This training may be provided during recruit training or at their first duty station.

You may be required to attend such a course if you are found at fault in a traffic mishap while operating a government motor vehicle. You may also be required to attend such a course if you have been convicted of serious moving traffic violations in a government or private vehicle on base.

The Commander, Naval Safety Center (COMNAV-SAFECEN) certifies instructors who conduct the American Automobile Association's Driver Improvement Program at commands throughout the Navy.

Individuals **must not be assigned** as drivers of Navy police vehicles, ambulances, fire trucks, and crash and rescue vehicles until they have successfully completed the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Emergency Vehicle Operator Course (EVOC). This course is conducted by a COMNAV-SAFECEN approved instructor. This training is to be repeated every 3 years thereafter to ensure competency in the safe operation of such vehicles.

ALCOHOL

Alcohol seriously affects a person's ability to operate a motor vehicle. Alcohol is the leading

contributing factor in motor-vehicle-related deaths and injuries. Small amounts of alcohol (one beer or a mixed drink) can affect a person's judgment and motor skills. The best defense is **don't drive after drinking** (fig. 10-4). Make arrangements for alternate forms of transportation (for example, call a taxi or a friend, or designate someone to drive who is not going to drink). You are not permitted to have open containers of alcohol in your possession while operating or as a passenger in a motor vehicle on any naval installation.

PEDESTRIANS

The Navy Traffic Safety Program also pertains to pedestrians. Personnel **are not authorized** to jog on main roads and streets on naval installations with high traffic density and during peak traffic periods. Local commanders are required to define and publish the peak traffic periods of the locale and the roads and streets with high-density traffic.

If possible, avoid jogging on roads and streets on naval installations; use defined jogging facilities or routes when available. When jogging on roads and streets, jog in patrolled areas and wear light-colored clothing. During periods of reduced visibility (for example, at night or during fog or rain), wear reflective clothing. Jog facing traffic and obey traffic rules and regulations.

Appropriate fluorescent or reflective personal protective equipment **must be provided to and used by all personnel** who are exposed to traffic hazards in their assigned duties. This requirement involves traffic control personnel, roadway maintenance and construction crews, and electricians and telephone repair personnel working on overhead lines.

PORTABLE HEADPHONES

Portable entertainment devices, such as miniature headset radios, cassette players, or other devices with headphones, can be dangerous. Not only do they produce hazardous noise if turned up to full volume, but they can cause mishaps. People have been killed while walking on train tracks or along roadways because they could not hear horns or warnings.

The use of portable headphones, earphones, or other listening devices is prohibited on roadways, sidewalks, and shoulders along roadways on all naval facilities while operating a motor vehicle, jogging, walking, bicycling, or skating. That does not include the use of hearing aids or hearing-protective equipment, nor does it negate the requirement for wearing hearing-protective

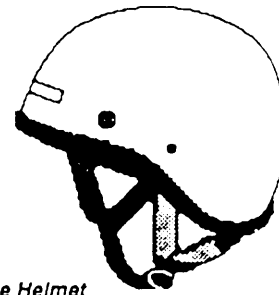
BLOOD ALCOHOL CONCENTRATION (BAC) CHART																
	1 Drink				2 Drinks				3 Drinks				4 Drinks			
After hours	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
Weight pounds 80	—	—	—	.02	—	—	.05	.08	.07	.10	.10	.10	.12	.12	.15	.15
100	—	—	—	.02	—	—	.04	.06	.05	.07	.08	.09	.09	.10	.12	.13
120	—	—	—	.02	—	—	.03	.04	.03	.04	.06	.08	.06	.08	.09	.11
140	—	—	—	.01	—	—	.02	.04	.02	.03	.05	.06	.04	.06	.08	.09
160	—	—	—	.01	—	—	.02	.03	.01	.02	.04	.05	.03	.04	.06	.08
180	—	—	—	.01	—	—	.01	.03	—	.02	.03	.04	.02	.04	.05	.07
200	—	—	—	—	—	—	.01	.02	—	.01	.03	.04	.01	.03	.04	.06
	5 Drinks				6 Drinks				7 Drinks				8 Drinks			
After hours	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
Weight pounds 80	.17	.17	.19	.20	.19	.22	.22	.25	.25	.27	.27	.30	.29	.30	.32	.33
100	.13	.14	.16	.17	.16	.18	.19	.21	.20	.22	.23	.25	.24	.25	.27	.28
120	.09	.11	.13	.14	.13	.14	.16	.17	.15	.17	.19	.20	.19	.20	.22	.23
140	.07	.09	.10	.12	.10	.12	.13	.15	.13	.14	.16	.17	.15	.17	.18	.20
160	.06	.07	.09	.10	.08	.09	.11	.13	.10	.12	.13	.15	.13	.14	.16	.17
180	.04	.06	.07	.09	.06	.08	.09	.11	.09	.10	.12	.13	.11	.12	.14	.15
200	.03	.04	.06	.08	.05	.07	.08	.09	.07	.09	.10	.12	.09	.10	.12	.13
Numbers (.01 through .33) equal the percentage of alcohol in the blood. Dash (—) = a trace of alcohol.																
GUIDE																
BAC	BEHAVIOR															
.01%-.04%	<i>Affected</i> —Judgment begins to lessen; person is less critical of actions; reaction time is slowed; indications of mental relaxation may appear.															
.05%-.09%	<i>Impaired</i> —Judgment is not sound; thinking and reasoning powers are not clear; the ability to do complex jobs is lessened.															
.10%	<i>Intoxicated</i> —Judgment and reasoning powers are severely hampered; cannot do common simple acts without error.															

Figure 10-4.—Alcohol and driving don't mix.

HELMET FIT

Helmet fit is very important. A helmet that is too small will be uncomfortable, while one that is too large will be more likely to come off in a crash, even with the chin strap fastened. A helmet should fit snugly; it should not turn freely on your head.

Always try a helmet on for size before you buy it. Your motorcycle dealer should be able to help you select one that fits properly.



Partial Coverage Helmet

CHIN STRAP

Helmets are effective only if they stay on in a crash. If the chin strap is not fastened, the helmet can come off. Partial coverage helmets are more likely to come off than are the other types. The chin strap should be tightened until it is snug, without cutting into your neck. Some newer helmets don't use chin straps, but have another type of retention system. They should be used according to the manufacturer's instructions.



Full Coverage Helmet

EYE PROTECTION

Windshields alone do not provide adequate protection against eye injuries when riding a motorcycle. Bugs and airborne debris can cause eye injuries and distract your attention enough to cause a crash. Traveling at highway speed without eye protection can also cause squinting and excessive tearing, both of which will impair your ability to see. Always use a helmet face shield or goggles. Most helmets are sold with a face shield or with the snap fasteners so one can be attached.



Complete Facial Coverage Helmet

Figure 10-5.—Motorcycle helmets.

equipment where conditions dictate. Also exempted is communication equipment being used for official business.

MOTORCYCLES

The Navy uses the term *motorcycle* to refer to motorcycles, motorscooters, motorized bicycles, mopeds, and all-terrain vehicles (ATVS). If you are in the Navy and operate a motorcycle, on or off base, **you are required** to successfully complete a motorcycle safety program approved by NAVSAFECEN. You must be licensed by a state to operate a motorcycle before you can enroll in the course. You must also complete this course before you can obtain a base sticker that allows you to operate a motorcycle on base. Although you cannot license an ATV for operation on public roadways, all ATV operators must successfully complete the All Terrain Vehicle Safety Institute (ASI) ATV Rider Course.

Motorcycle safety courses are available throughout the Navy. You are not required to pay for those courses. Once you have successfully completed an approved course, it is important you continue to practice your riding skills. The skills you learn in the course are only effective if they are used. **About half of all motorcycle accidents involve personnel with less than 5 months' riding experience on the motorcycle involved.**

Navy motorcycle operators must wear the following protective equipment when operating/riding a motorcycle:

- A properly fastened helmet that meets U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) standards.
- Properly worn eye-protective devices, which are defined as impact- or shatter-resistant eye-glasses, goggles, or a face shield attached to a helmet. A motorcycle-mounted windshield is not considered to be proper eye protection.

- A long-sleeved shirt or jacket, long-legged trousers, and full-finger leather or equivalent gloves.
- Properly worn hard-soled shoes with heels. Riders are encouraged to wear over-the-ankle shoes or boots.
- A commercially available, brightly colored, mesh or fabric safety vest with reflective vertical, horizontal, or diagonal stripes front and back with a minimum of 130 square inches of reflective area; 65 square inches on the front and 65 square inches on the back.

The proper personal protective equipment (PPE) for motorcycle riders does much more than protect them during a mishap. It also protects them from exposure to the environment. A helmet and eye/face protection (fig. 10-5) protect from wind blast, sand, gravel, bugs, and so forth. Clothing protects the riders from weather, flying objects, and hot parts of the motorcycle. Since motorcyclists are exposed to these conditions each time they ride, they should protect themselves as much as possible by wearing PPE.

SUMMARY

We discussed the most important points of the traffic safety program covered in OPNAVINST 5100.12F, *Issuance of Navy Traffic Safety Program*. We discussed to whom the program applies; possible penalties for failure to comply; safety belt regulations; driver education; pedestrians; and the use of alcohol, portable headphones, and motorcycles.

Read this chapter carefully and follow its directions. We want you to live and enjoy operating your motor vehicles for a long time.

